

Commercial and Industrial Buildings,  
Bennett House Hotel  
84 Main Street  
Dubuque  
Dubuque County  
Iowa

HABS No. IA-160-BB

HABS  
IOWA,  
31-DUBU,  
13-BB-

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**PHOTOGRAPHS  
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

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Historic American Buildings Survey  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver Colorado 80225

## Bennett House Hotel

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Site Location: 84 Main Street  
Dubuque, Dubuque County, Iowa  
DOT designation: Resource Site No. 5.22  
Cadastral grid : SE1/4 NE1/4 S25 T89N R2E  
USGS quadrangle: Dubuque South Iowa 7.5'  
UTM coordinates: 15.691985.4707190  
Lot dimensions : 47.5'x 113': .12 acre  
Lot description: South 1/2 of Lot 532 and  
North 25' of Lot 532A;  
West 1/2 of Lot 2A and  
North 24' of West 1/2 of  
Lot 3, Block 1 of Dubuque  
Harbor Company Addition.

Present Owner: R. and Mary L. Love  
Present Usage: apartment housing  
Present Condition : fair

Overall Dimensions: 3-story main block: 48'6"x 36'; rear wing: 25'6"x 30'.

Orientation : west

Architectural Plan type : 3-story rectangular, 2-center-hall hotel.

Description : Foundation: (below grade)

Structure : wood frame with brick masonry bearing walls.

Ext. walls: common red brick laid in common bond.

Roof : flat composition roof with brick parapet walls.

Chimneys : exterior chimneys integral with party walls.

Openings : painted wood 1/1 double-hung windows with  
segmentally arched stone lintels and stone lug  
sills on 2nd and 3rd floors; 1st floor store-  
front with iron columns and lintel replaced  
with wood siding and small windows and doors;  
plainly cased 1/1 wood double hung windows on  
rear with brick segmental arch (2nd and 3rd  
floors) or loose lintel (1st floor) heads.

Details : full-width metal cornice on front, with lions  
heads on faces of brackets; inset brick panels  
between cornice and 3rd floor windows; ornamen-  
tal cast iron columns on 1st floor storefront.

Construction Date : 1877; 1883

Architecture Style: 19th Century Functional

Physical History : In 1877 Richard Bennett constructed the three-story brick  
Bennett House Hotel on lower Main Street for the reported cost of \$3,000. The  
facility was relatively small, with a restaurant and saloon on the first floor  
and guest rooms aligned on either side of a center hallway on the upper two  
floors. The building's facade was typically configured for a late 19th century  
commercial structure: cast iron storefront with plate glass showcase windows

on the ground floor and smaller, double-hung windows with arched heads on the floors above. Six years later Bennett built an almost identical side addition, installing a metal cornice on the facade to tie the two structures visually. Costing \$3,600, this new construction doubled the building's size and expanded the hotel to a 33-room capacity, "supplied with all modern conveniences." By the mid-1890s Peter Huss had taken over as the hotel's proprietor. He later re-named it the Huss House but kept the facilities essentially unchanged. Although owners changed in later years, the hotel was called the Huss House until the early 1930s, when it became the Park Hotel and then, in the 1940s, the Main Hotel. The hotel has most recently functioned as low-rental housing. Over its extended occupation, the building has retained a great degree of exterior integrity. The first floor storefront was replaced in 1958, a steel fire escape has been bolted onto the front of the 1883 wing, and a one-story wing was added onto the rear in 1964, but the building remains otherwise intact.

**Significance:** Born in Ireland in 1828, Richard Bennett emigrated to the United States at the age of eighteen. After landing in New York, he traveled to Boston, where he worked for five years as a butcher. Bennett married Hannah Delebar, also an emigre from Ireland, in 1850, and a year later he moved to Indiana to take up farming. After several years, Bennett moved to Springfield, Kentucky, to operate a retail grocery store, and then to Chicago to open another grocery store, and finally to Dubuque, where he built this small hotel: one of some thirty such establishments then in Dubuque. "It is well conducted and has found favor with the public," a Dubuque gazetteer stated in 1894. Located a few blocks south of the heart of Dubuque's central business district in a manufacturing and warehousing area, the Bennett House was in reality only a commercial grade lodge. An 1886 account of commercial and industrial facilities in town listed the Lorimier House on the corner of 8th and Bluff streets as the finest among the city's 25 hotels, and then, in order of accommodations, the Julien House, Key City House, Page House and Jefferson House. It did not mention the Bennett House. This building is architecturally important as a typical and relatively well-preserved example of 19th Century Functional design.

**References:** Dubuque City Directories: 1857 - 1970.  
Sanborn Insurance Maps: 1879, 1884, 1891, 1909, 1972.  
Iowa State Gazetteer and Business Directory: 1882-1918.  
Dubuque County Assessment Record: 3-17-10-2.  
Dubuque City Building Permit Record: 84 Main Street.  
Iowa Department of Transportation, "Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Cultural Resources Assessment."  
*Portrait and Biographical Record of Dubuque, Jones and Clayton Counties, Iowa* (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Company, 1894), page 532.  
*Dubuque Daily Herald*: 14 December 1877; 20 December 1883.

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